



Action Plan for Cities. Model Locality

Executive summary

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Action Plan for Cities. Model Locality (Polish: Plan Działań dla Miast. Modelowa lokalność, PDM), launched by the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy, and under the aegis of UN-Habitat, is a unique programme both on a European and global scale. So far, “Action Plans for Cities” have been developed for the selected cities. Before the 11th Session of the World City Forum (WUF11), Poland has adopted a different approach. Activities being undertaken by the Polish cities are presented one holistic document enabling to show their rich experience. The programme connects the cities that respond in various ways to local challenges in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, set out in the 2030 Agenda. The document will be symbolically signed on June 28, 2022 in Katowice, during the 11th Session of the World City Forum, the prestigious international conference organised by UN-Habitat. The PDM is also a strategic programme embedded in the National Urban Policy 2030, and complemented by a handbook showing good practices developed recently by the Polish cities to deal with challenges related to 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including population poverty, social inequalities, barriers to development economic or climate change.

The Polish cities participating in the programme vary due to their sizes (comprising the cities with poviats rights, urban municipalities and urban-rural municipalities). As a result of the multi-path recruitment, 104 cities have joined the programme. The participants receive strategic expert advisory support while realising the declared projects. The cities have been chosen on the basis of three qualification paths: in open recruitment (35 cities), expert recruitment (34 cities) and through educational networks (35 cities). With the advisory support, they developed reports reflecting their individual approach to the “Model Locality” and presenting the project selected for implementation under the programme. The result of their involvement will consist in implementing the designated projects by the end of 2022, although a significant number of the projects will be continued in the next years. Each project meets at least one Sustainable Development Goal, in accordance with the city’s needs. As most of the cities meet all goals listed in the 2030 Agenda, selecting a maximum of three goals in the description of good practices and declaring one goal, to which the submitted project is linked, was a big challenge.

The structure of the “Action Plan for Cities” consists of four coherent parts:

- All hands on deck – co-authors of the “Action Plan for Cities”,
- Sustainable Development Goals in the projects submitted by the Polish cities,
- Planned effects of the submitted projects,
- Legacy of the 11th Session of the World City Forum in the “Action Plan for Cities”.



Such division organises the material into a synchronous document, indicating, at the same time, the importance of its components. It is not accidental that it starts with the list of entities preparing the document. In almost every city, not only the Local Coordinator from the City Hall was involved, but also a wide group of other experts, scientists, activists or simply residents who were particularly close to the submitted projects. The list of over 200 entities at the beginning of the document is a gesture of honour for their enormous work and an emphasis on the human being as the most important for creating the city and the changes taking place in it.

PROJECTS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development indicated 17 Goals that holistically define the most important tasks to be implemented for a significant improvement in the quality of life worldwide. The cities participating in the programme try to achieve them all daily. For the purposes of the document, however, one project which represents activities aimed at achieving one goal, was selected. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the projects a significant part of the cities also indicated other accompanying goals.

In the Goal 1, the main assumption, of which is to eliminate poverty in all its forms, the activities of the Polish cities focus on counteracting negative social phenomena, which are most often manifested by the lack of sufficient material resources to meet life needs. The projects concern, inter alia, responsible management of municipal housing resources, including the construction of new municipal, rental and social houses. Other projects focus on help in getting out from the so-called spiral of debt and support for people in a homeless crisis.

The Goal 2, based on the vision of eliminating hunger and achieving food security through better nutrition and promotion of sustainable agriculture, is implemented mainly by supporting the ideas of community fridges (Polish: jadłodzielnia). The task set by the cities is to support grass-roots initiatives to reduce food waste and losses, which are expressed by the exchange of food products between residents, among others.

Providing all people of all ages with a healthy life and promoting welfare are the assumptions of the Goal 3. The projects meeting this objective assume a very comprehensive approach for improving the quality of physical and mental health. A significant part of such activities involves the creation of people-friendly spaces. Characteristic elements are green areas, parks, city orchards, as well as infrastructure for walking and cycling, created in harmony with nature. Another approach consists in building friendly and safe housing estates with common spaces and ecologically responsible construction. The projects take into consideration of the needs of elderly people, for whom



a rehabilitation programme is being implemented, which aims to solve the problems related to their life and functioning in the city. In addition, some projects introduce system changes aimed at implementing a circular economy, the assumption of which is not only to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or improve human relations with the environment, but also to create an efficient, innovative closed-loop city management system which will significantly improve the quality of health of the inhabitants.

In order to provide high-quality education to all and promote lifelong learning, i. e. by implementing the tasks set out in the Goal 4, some cities start by creating or improving an appropriate support infrastructure. The undertaken activities will include the creation of a modern educational, recreation and sports complex; the Eco school, i. e. a place of education, culture and intergenerational integration; the “Literary Garden”, i. e. the renovated square connected with the library’s front garden, which will be modernised in accordance with the energy audit. All cities also introduce a number of new educational activities. The main subjects, on which they focus are: ecological awareness, circular economy, entrepreneurship, innovation, general activation of the society, and international cooperation. The activities are introduced in the spirit of a conscious city that supports knowledge.

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the main goal of the cities implementing the Goal 5. Their activities are horizontal, even systemic, aimed at creating equal opportunities regardless of gender. The cities want to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the areas of professional and social life. The main basis for their activities is the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life, on the basis of which they introduce their own Equality Policies or Equality Action Plans, which are supported by broadly understood educational activities.

The Goal 6 is to provide all people with access to water and appropriate sanitary conditions. It is implemented by municipalities with the notion of the circular economy. The cities are introducing solutions for responsible management of water resources, which are combined with reducing expenses while improving water quality and sanitation. Investments comprise digitisation and modernisation of water supply infrastructure, construction of sewage treatment plants, pumping stations and laboratories. Additionally, it is planned to introduce renewable energy sources in order to improve the energy balance of the sewage treatment plant and the entire commune.

By providing access to affordable, stable, sustainable and modern energy for all, in line with the Goal 7, the cities are introducing a range of investments that rely strongly on green energy. Their main objective is to pursue transformation that will result in an increase in energy self-sufficiency and an improvement in the quality of the natural environment. Cities, using their own resources,



introduce more effective energy solutions for the currently operating heating systems, reconstruction of the damming for hydropower use, geothermal recovery, construction of a biomass and gas heating plant, increasing the fermentation capacity of the treatment plant, replacement of heat sources and improvement of energy efficiency residential buildings, measures to reduce the emission of air pollutants from the combustion of solid fuels in individual heating installations or the use of local energy balancing areas for the optimisation and development of dispersed networks. Additionally, the local community, non-governmental organisations and entrepreneurs are involved in the activities. The projects will also contribute to the development of the local energy market, and, above all, to the improvement of energy security and the quality of the natural environment.

The Goal 8 aims to achieve overall economic growth and decent work. The implemented projects are a direct response to the challenges related to the development of entrepreneurship in the context of smaller cities. Their main problem is migration, hence the projects assume tasks related to the detention of residents. They are based on building new, friendly housing estates, improving the activities and quality of public institutions, creating virtual hubs for micro-companies or building an energy cluster. Additionally, a very important component are educational activities consisting in climate-neutral early education, digital education and the implementation of the Education + Work concept.

The Goal 9 is to build stable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation. The city projects pursuing this goal are quite diverse. Their intervention in the economic sphere include the emphasis on building a strong industry, investing in innovation as a factor for improving productivity, promoting sustainable industrialisation and strengthening investment financing. In addition, a new idea of the city's strategy to involve the widest possible group of residents, non-governmental organisations, universities, scientific institutions and local enterprises for creation a coalition for smart solutions, including a programming marathon project. Its aim is to implement innovative and original projects, but also to promote and encourage citizens to actively participate in the city's life. In the sphere of infrastructure, the cities have proposed a number of investments in the form of comprehensive replacement of road lighting and park lighting with LED lighting; improvement of road infrastructure; establishment of a modern municipal Selective Waste Collection Point with a wide catalogue of approved waste and establishment of an ecological education centre. In addition, it is planned to build parking lots, charging stations for electric cars, purchase electric vehicles, as well as create a prototype of an electric car for tourists with an innovative navigation system.



The Goal 10 assumes reducing broadly understood inequalities. The cities focus mainly on active social activities, a significant part of which are related to urban deprived areas. The projects assume disseminating knowledge among all social groups about the created monitoring system regarding environmental protection and climate change, implementation of micro-grants for social activists, informal groups and non-governmental organisations. A series of trainings, during which the activities aimed at the revitalisation of green areas in the city will be undertaken. A very important element of these projects is reaching out to people and raising the sense of local identity, which is why some projects consist of street workers' activities or the involvement of residents in the investment implementation process.

The Goal 11 aims to make cities and human settlements safe, stable, sustainable and inclusive. When implementing the projects, the cities very often use the urban regeneration process which they approached very horizontally, paying particular attention to the most important components, starting with participation and public consultations. The aim of the projects is, above all, to build an environmentally friendly, safe, affordable space, adapted to the residents' needs. As part of these activities, it is planned to involve local communities in the preparation and implementation of activities. Specific projects include: physical, economic, social and cultural revitalisation of the city centre; modernisation of a square in order to create a place full of greenery, encouraging reading and relaxing; park revitalisation; comprehensive reconstruction and revitalisation of a market square; creating a friendly space for social meetings and workshops organised as part of a centre for social activities. Some of the projects with a wider approach propose the creation of a comprehensive concept and standards for the transformation of the centre; an integrated concept of land development located within the revitalisation area; testing the transition from a non-statutory revitalisation programme to a municipal revitalisation programme; or the development of a strategic model of action for the sustainable development of the city. The activities are to end with an evaluation of the implementation of the urban regeneration programme. New places will offer available public infrastructure, as well as supporting, productive and effective transformation, enabling the development of economic initiatives and pro-social activities. The aforementioned infrastructure intervention concerns limiting car traffic, such as: bicycle paths, pedestrian routes, urban greenery and the development of low-emission public transport. Additional steps towards achieving the goal include: building an electronic, database city management system based on the Internet of Things (IoT); diagnosis and identification, together with the inhabitants, of the most travelled pedestrian routes; creating a comprehensive and complementary offer of three institutions: the Municipal Public Library (MBP), the Business Station and the Youth Club, and a promotional campaign aimed at increasing the number of the city's inhabitants by promoting the council housing offered by the city.



The Goal 12 assumes responsible consumption and production. The projects implemented by the cities implement the idea of reducing the negative impact of waste management by reducing the overall effects of resource use and improving the efficiency of such use. The undertaken activities are based on the circular economy, showing the practical aspects of implementing the circular economy in selected areas of urban policy. Particular attention is paid to the closed cycle in the management of various types of waste, mainly plastic, with particular emphasis on the issued administrative decisions. It is equally important to close the bio-waste cycle, inter alia, on the basis of research activities on new materials and technologies in the renewable energy sector. To achieve this goal the cities also undertake investments consisting in the expansion and modernisation of permanent and mobile Selective Waste Collection Points or MBP installations in order to conduct organic recycling and prepare selectively collected waste for further processes. In this aspect, the cities are well aware of the importance of implementing educational activities related to responsible consumption and production. In addition, projects related to responsible consumerism are implemented, they consist in developing the principles of a balanced meal, covering aspects from public procurement to involve stakeholders in planning meals and reducing food waste, as well as food collection at marketplaces, promotional activities, quantitative and qualitative research on purchasing habits, food waste and its circulation.

Under the Goal 13 the cities are taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its consequences. The vast majority of the projects are expressed in greening the space. The projects aim at vastly introducing blue-green infrastructure in the urban space, mainly replacing concrete structures on roundabouts, squares, along communication routes, or near educational institutions, among others. They are most often introduced on the basis of broader urban policies, including spatial development approach, and are accompanied by educational and information campaigns. Very important visible elements are new electric buses, expansion of the public transport connections, implementation of an anti-smog system, reduction of chimney emissions and environmental education.

For the Goal 14 – Life under water, the implemented measures emphasise the importance of sea waters as a natural common good, insufficiently used so far. In turn, the Goal 15 – Life on land, which aims at protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, is expressed in very similar projects. They focus mainly on introducing areas of blue and green infrastructure, including flower meadows, the main task of which is to improve biodiversity. Additional elements are houses for insects, animals and honey-bearing perennials. The projects are supplemented with recreational and sports elements that interfere with the environment as little as possible. Other projects include a broadly understood green development, cooperation of local governments and communities in order to stop the degradation of the environment.



Promotion of an inclusive society, peace, justice and strong institutions are the tasks of the Goal 16. The projects that fit within this goal ensure transparent information and dialogue between the authorities and residents. They aim at involving all social groups, in particular people with disabilities, in shaping a modern city and consolidating active social attitudes. They identify challenges in individual neighbourhoods of a given commune, in order to identify potentials and develop priorities with the inhabitants using various participatory methods. Equally important is the care for the common, sometimes difficult historical heritage, which is why the project of reconstruction and expansion of the Woldenberg Museum for the development of cross-border cooperation is underway. The cities are also aware of important procedural and formal issues, such as adequate access to information on the real estate tax rates in the revitalisation areas, thanks to which they increase citizens' knowledge and awareness as well as the sense of security in their relations with the authorities.

The Goal 17 is about partnership for the achieving all goals. The activities within this goal primarily concern multidimensional, local, regional and international cooperation. The cities implement it by involving young people in the city's affairs in order to get a new perspective and a broader look at the activities in the field of sustainable development, as well as the implementation of a comprehensive programme summarising planned activities related to conducting a coordinated and effective pro-ecological policy covering all aspects of life.

RESULTS

The projects presented in the document "Action Plan for Cities" constitute a holistic path leading us to a better future. The unique feature of the document is the individual character of the submitted projects. The effects of the above-mentioned activities are presented in the document in the form of a concise table showing the products and results assigned to each goal, but with no reference to the respective cities. That is due to the willingness to show solidarity and community in achieving the intended goals as one organism. Additionally, because of the interdisciplinary character of the projects, the products and results of the individual cities overlap significantly.

The results are numerous and diverse: analyses, applications, construction and reconstruction undertakings, certificates, debates, subsidies, educational activities, forums, investments, campaigns, concepts, specific investments and implementations, liquidations, modernisations, offers, studies, platforms, programmes, prototypes, systems, trainings, workshops, implementations, guidelines, classes and assumptions. The multitude of solutions indicates the



holistic and interdisciplinary nature of the study, the results of which contribute to the achievement of the “Model Locality”.

THE WUF11 LEGACY

Under the “Action Plan for Cities”, the cities have the opportunity to increase their contribution for further activities under the WUF11 Legacy (WUF11 Legacy) in 2023-2024 and recommendations based on advisory services.

A significant part of the cities has taken the advantage of this opportunity. Depending on the submitted project, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the cities have declared very different directions for further activities within the WUF11 Legacy, which comprise:

- Further actions taken by the cities regarding changes in the urban space and shaping the area development agenda,
- Activities aimed at environmental protection, implementation of ecological solutions and development of urban green areas,
- Activities aimed at the development and improvement of the quality of life of the local community, civic activity and public participation,
- Activities related to the development of a coherent management system for executive documents and projects in the city, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of strategic documents,
- Activities focused on education in the field of supporting innovation and promoting sustainable industrialisation,
- Guidelines related to community activities,
- Housing policy measures,
- Educational and information campaigns aimed at both direct project recipients and residents,
- Advisory-based recommendations for soft guidelines and tips that can be adapted to local conditions.

In addition, some cities have presented guidelines directly resulting from the implementation of their projects. They form a knowledge base that can be used by other administrative units, while the transferred experience can be an inspiration for other cities or regions.

Complementary to the planned activities of the cities, an important component of the Legacy of the 11th Session of the World Urban Forum is “Toolbox for Local Communities”, which is also being



developed under the “Action Plan for Cities. Model Locality”. First of all, the toolkit is to be an on-line encyclopaedia, in the Wiki formula, for residents, containing information, on how they can get involved in the urban space and city management process improvement. Secondly, it will be a platform for the exchange of experiences and the way of communication between residents, social and urban activists.